

Legislature Passes Bill To Ban Smoking At State Health Facilities

The measure headed to Gov. David Ige would prohibit using tobacco and electronic smoking inside and outside the sites.

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Employees, visitors and patients at Hawaii Health Systems Corporation hospitals would be prohibited from smoking anywhere on the premises under a bill that is headed for Gov. David Ige's desk after it was approved 21-0 on the Senate floor on Friday.

[Senate Bill 305](#) would ban the use of tobacco and electronic smoking devices inside and outside of the 13 HHSC facilities in the islands.

The HHSC facilities on Oahu are the Maluhia and Leahi hospitals and Kuhuku Medical Center.



Leahi Hospital is one of 13 facilities that would be covered by the inside-outside smoking ban.

The bill would require displaying signs at all facility entrances and at prominent locations stating that “tobacco and electronic smoking device use is prohibited.”

Smoking would also be prohibited in all visitor and employee parking lots.

The measure defines electronic smoking devices as any electronic product that can be used to disperse and deliver nicotine or other substances to user. This includes but is not limited to electronic cigarettes, electronic cigars and hookahs.

The measure was proposed during the [2015 legislative session](#), but was carried over to this year.

Previous testimony on the bill argued that there was no basis for treating e-cigarettes and vapor products the same as tobacco products.

In written testimony supporting the measure, Jessica Yamauchi, Hawaii Public Health Institute executive director, said secondhand smoke was an issue, but so were financial concerns.

“Smoking and tobacco use contribute to a wide range of institutional costs,” Yamauchi said. “These costs include employee absenteeism, extensive health care costs and increased medical insurance costs, fire risk, negative environmental impacts, and increased cleaning and maintenance costs.”

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